

Nutrition for Your Health

Your guide to better living

Dr. Dale Kelly, DC

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Sunscreen Wars

We've been told for many years that the sun is bad! According to the Mayo Clinic, all forms of skin cancer have been on the rise. The greatest rise has been in melanoma, which is the most serious and most deadly type of skin cancer. Even with our sun-phobic, sunscreen-wearing society, the percentage of people with melanoma has more than doubled over the last 30 years.

In contradiction to the "typical" skin cancer prevention advice, the journal *Cancer* in March 2002, did an examination of 506 regions and found a close inverse correlation between cancer mortality and levels of ultraviolet B light. The likeliest mechanism for a protective effect of sunlight is vitamin D, which is synthesized by the body in the presence of ultraviolet B. In a more recent study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* [February 2, 2005], 528 melanoma patients were assessed. It was found that even sunburn, high intermittent sun exposure, and self-reported skin awareness were all linked to improved survival from melanoma. Attempting to explain their findings the authors note that sun exposure is essential for the skin to make vitamin D3. Vitamin D has been shown to be anticancer in nature and therefore could explain the beneficial association between sun exposure and survival from melanoma.

So, where does this leave our devotion to sunscreen? According to a researcher from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, sunscreen does not protect against melanoma. However, interestingly enough, Octyl methoxycinnamate (OMC), which is present in 90 % of sunscreen brands, was found to kill mouse skin cells even at low doses in a study by Norwegian scientists. There are also many other chemicals in sunscreens to be concerned about.

According to the National Institute of Health, sunscreens with a sun protection factor of 8 or greater will block UV rays that produce vitamin D. Along with increased risk of cancer, Vitamin D deficiency is associated with weakened bones, osteoporosis in elderly, in post-menopausal women, and in individuals on chronic steroid therapy, insulin deficiency and insulin resistance,

progression of degenerative arthritis of the knee and hip, infertility, PMS, Fatigue and Depression, Auto Immune Disorders, Obesity, Syndrome X.

We were told the sun was bad and we should limit our sun exposure. So, we did as we always do...we went overboard. We slather on the sunscreen and we work indoors so much that we hardly get ANY full spectrum sun exposure. Another component to this puzzle is the attack on Vitamin D supplementation. So now, we're not making vitamin D the way we should from the sun exposure and the fear stories in the media have us scared to take even 400IU of Vitamin D. This has obviously created a problem. It's easy to blame everything on the sun when you don't have good science. None of these studies on skin cancer even mention or consider high consumption of raw, fresh fruits and vegetables, antioxidant supplementation or consumption of good quality, natural fats.

In addition, look at all of the chemicals we are putting on our skin on a day-to-day basis. Read the ingredient labels on your skin care products and cosmetics. Take some time to find out what those ingredients are and any potential side effects they may have. I think you will be quite surprised and have some great ammunition to prevent skin cancer. If you are interested in findings good quality skin care products, refer to your local health food store or go online to www.allnaturalcosmetics.com

Even though the study above suggests that even a sunburn plays a positive factor in survival from skin cancer, we still suggest you use caution in regards to burning the skin.

To avoid the burn:

- In the early season, slowly work yourself into exposing your skin to the sun
- Optimal hours of sun exposure are morning hours until noon and evening hours 3pm to dark.
- Instead of toxic chemical sunscreens, use clothing and hats to shelter your skin when you must be outside for longer periods of time and/or try one of the natural sunscreens by Aubrey Organics or the online store recommended above.
- For light skinned people, about 10-20 minutes of exposure is enough to increase you natural vitamin D production. For the

darker skinned people, 20-30 minutes may be necessary.

- e. During the winter, if you do have problems with seasonal depression due to Vitamin D deficiency, you can try supplementing your diet [getting a blood test will help you determine how much you need; contact our office for more details] or going to a tanning bed for 8-10 minutes per session, once or twice per week.

Should you get burned, we recommend the following regimen to help the skin to heal and repair:

For a couple of days [150lb adult] take Vitamin C (6000 – 10,000mg), E (1200IU), Beta Carotene (100,000 – 150,000mg), EPA/DHA (3000mg), GLA (240mg), drink lots of clean water and apply cool aloe vera gel to the affected area.

**Don't Guess About Your Health...
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